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ABSTRACT

Community colleges have four primary resources: income, faculty and staff, the physical plant, and students. This document recommends methods of taking a hard look at the ways in which these resources are and can be utilized. The budgeting structure must be thoroughly examined to determine the extent to which it is flexible and to which it provides incentives for departmental savings. Faculty fellowships should be provided for concentration on specific projects; this saves money for the institution in that the project is usually completed in a shorter period of time and is better planned than if developed on a catch-as-catch-can basis. Noted faculty members should be shared between institutions with the home institution paying the salary--this provides new faces and new ideas at a time when faculty are not turning over, and occasionally gives the teacher the feeling that the home institution is not so bad after all. Institutions should increasingly share facilities and responsibilities. Classified staff should be motivated through financial rewards and better recognition of their expertise to devise money-saving ideas. Equipment and space sharing possibilities should be examined. Students should be given credit for voluntary work experience on the campus and should be tapped as a source of potential ideas. (DC)

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RESOURCE PAPER NO. 1

THE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

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The Resource Development Concept: Institutional Resources

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The mobilization of institutional resources is a task we all face. But before we can begin to mobilize, we need to identify what those resources may be, examine how they are presently being used, comment upon how well they are being used, and suggest ways in which they might better be used.

As I view it, our primary resources are (1) the money we receive from a variety of sources, (2) the faculty and staff which operate the institution, (3) the physical plant itself, and (4) the students who attend.

The first and often only resource examined seems to be the budget. How often we hear cries.....and cry ourselves....."If only we had more money, if only that grant would come through, if only, if only....." We know basically from year to year the operating budget allocation we will receive. The first task, then, is a thorough examination of the present budgeting structure within the institution. Business managers may hate to see their methods exposed but such an examination of the process must be conducted. If you do not have an understanding of the financial operations of your institution, then the first resource to develop is YOU. It is not always that the business manager is loath to have you understand what is being done; more often no one has really bothered to inquire. When we forfeit all understanding to the business manager, we have no right to complain if the buck does not stretch far enough.

An analysis of the budget making process should be done with several factors in mind. Of primary concern is FLEXIBILITY. Do the department chairmen have any control over expenditures and, if so, how much? Is there any incentive provided for departmental savings or do we just assume that everyone pads the budget since the administration makes cuts across the board anyway? Does the department chairman have the flexibility to convert full-time faculty to part-time faculty if the savings will be returned to the department to meet a pressing need? Can clerical support be traded for instructional materials or vice versa? When operational savings occur, do these funds revert to the general fund or do they, in fact, return to the department as a rightful reward? Do you budget on the basis of line item or allocate a lump sum to the department to spend in whatever manner is appropriate? How often have we seen the scurry to purchase extra items that have NOT been thought through before June 30. "If you don't spend it, they will assume you didn't need it and cut your budget next year." Rather than encouraging departments to economize one year so that a major purchase can be made the next, do we force them to spend it all now and holler for that extra next year; Administrative budgets, individually and collectively, should be subject to the same review.

Is there a mechanism fo encouraging the expansion or initiation of new programs without stealing from Peter to pay Paul? When a department knows that a savings would be credited toward the expansion or initiation of a new program, an incentive to save is provided. How often do we encourage new programs, but somehow expect it to be done within the existing budget limitation for the department. When the basic decisions for expansion and/or reduction of program offerings rests within the department, more and better independent decisions may come forth. Too often, we underestimate what faculty and department chairmen can and would do if, in fact, they had the budgetary control.

This more or less brings me to the second resource--that of the faculty, this is perhaps our greatest resource and one which goes largely untapped because we know so little about their interests and areas of expertise. But incentives can be provided here as well and this often comes in the form of institutional grants or faculty fellowships. When an institution sets aside 1-3% of its annual budget for such grants, they are purchasing the cheapest and most committed human resource available. When new courses or new programs need to be developed, who better to do it than the faculty member who will eventually be responsible? The alternatives are to (1) contract with a consulting firm for the services.....usually very expensive in dollars or (2) to assign the faculty member to do it on regular load.....but the faculty member already has many responsibilities.....the teaching load, committee assignments, community involvement, class preparation, student counseling, etc.....The desire to do the project may be there, but the time to do it may not. Remember---many of the assignments we make may require research, development of materials, off-campus activities and the like. As much as the teacher may want to pursue the project, it may not be physically possible to do so when confronted with continuing interruptions. Therefore, faculty fellowships have been developed at many institutions. These are competitive, and provide time and money for concentrated development of specific projects. These fellowships may be available during the vacation months or during the academic year, depending upon the nature of the work. When the faculty member is, in a sense, contracted for a project, the product usually comes forth in a specified period of time. The savings to the district comes when the project is ready for implementation in a shorter period of time and is generally better planned than if developed on a catch-as-catch-can basis.

The sharing of noted faculty members between institutions has yet to be developed to the fullest capacity. Universities maximize available talent through facility exchanges. We should think about doing the same. Trade-offs of faculty members for a specific period of time, with each home institution paying the salary, would have many benefits.....new faces at a time when faculty are not turning over.....new ideas since the visiting faculty member comes with a different viewpoint.....and maybe best of all, they might find

that the home institution is not as bad a place as they had previously thought.

Of course, dealing with surrounding community colleges brings to mind area planning.....each college can no longer afford to be all things to all people. Institutions themselves will have to explore the sharing possibilities. If programs for the disabled student are very expensive, College X may serve the blind and College Y may serve the deaf or orthopedically handicapped. If you have machine technology, I will offer printing. Area planning has not yet been mandated and actively enforced in my state. By its voluntary nature, it has been somewhat ineffective. But it will come and how much better it would be if the voluntary aspect would be assumed as an expanded commitment of an educational professional.

And, how many of you have a college or university virtually in your back yard? Have you noticed how interested they have become in the community college lately? Why I have even heard of the places where they have knocked on the community college door to see if there were ways in which they could work more closely. After all, the community college student should be interested in continuing at the neighborhood four-year college. Cooperative arrangements are very possible here. As representatives of the two institutions begin a dialogue, the possibilities become endless. Joint sponsorship of convocations, joint efforts in community services, sharing of instructional staff and facilities and on and on. The time seems to be right for this type of exploration.

In addition to the faculty member, classified staff members may also provide an alternative resource for the institution. Who knows better the operational activities of the place than those who clear it, clip it, file it and process it. What incentives are available to them if a cost savings can be realized; Many institutions provide a financial reward for a cost saving idea. Once implemented, the idea could save the institution far more than the cost of the reward. Again, classified members of the staff have areas of expertise of which we may be unaware. When identified, however, these skills can be put to use in the classroom via demonstration, teaching assistants or guest lecture. It is important for each person working at an institution to have a good feeling about the place, and what better than to be recognized as a necessary and important component.

The third resource I cited was the physical plant. This, of course, refers to space utilization, equipment, and other such non-human resources. Several questions can be asked: To what extent does each person or department need duplicated items of equipment? To what extent can these items be shared? Must the equipment always come to the people or can the people travel to the equipment? Are cooperative purchases allowed and encouraged in the budget process? In what ways can similar curriculum be modified to increase the utilization of laboratory equipment and classroom space? Faculty members may say, "This is mine and I won't share it" and have good reasons for their stand. If the charge is related to equipment breakage or lack of supervision, in what ways can the institution meet these charges and resolve them. If something does break, how long does it take to be repaired? "I'm not going to share my projector knowing that if you break it, I won't have a projector for six weeks much less for tomorrow's lesson." When the institution provides adequate service of equipment and facilities, the difficulties of sharing can at least be minimized. An analysis of such problems can bring interesting factors to light which can be met in a true cost-effectiveness manner.

And finally, we must not forget the vast resource of the students themselves. Although basically the students at our institution are here to learn in the traditional sense, it is possible to utilize the talents they bring with them to a much greater extent. You know, universities often laughingly refer to their source of cheap labor.....the graduate student.....and yet community colleges have not really sought to develop the student resource we have at hand. Yes, most of us have work-study students and some have cooperative education students doing the menial tasks we assign them. We may utilize peer counselors, peer tutors, or even laboratory assistants from our student body and pay them the minimum wage, but how many of us grant college credit for voluntary work experience on the campus, or arrange for credit "internships" in various departments or offices on the campus. The cry is heard....."But they really don't know how to do anything.....or, I have to spend so much time training them that nothing ever gets done." In many cases, that may be true; but, if we are indeed an educational institution, then this type of activity must be our commitment as well.

Additionally, it is important to remember that the average age of our students is increasing. Many of the students come to us with some work experience that provides a natural resource. It may be a testimonial as to how awful it was, or it may be that in the development of a new curriculum they could tell us what the present work conditions are really like, what equipment is being used in industry and what, from their somewhat limited experience, the skill requirements really are. Particularly with the older student appearing on the campus, expertise may be available in a variety of occupations that would be helpful in the classroom or the career guidance center. The RSVP and SCORE programs sponsored by the ACTION agency put the senior citizen to work in a productive way. Have we thought to explore developing similar resources within our campus walls?.....or is it just too much of a hassle.

There are many possibilities in the realm of institutional resources which, for the moment, will have to pass without comment. The important point is that you look for them in a fresh and creative manner. You know, Michelangelo commented that he was not a sculptor. The statue was in the block all along. All he had to do was remove the extraneous matter. For us, the institutional resources are there; all we have to do is open our eyes and see them.

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